

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
EXTENSION SERVICE
Washington 25, D. C.

September 3, 1947
For your information

TO STATE FARM LABOR SUPERVISORS OF FLORIDA, GEORGIA, SOUTH CAROLINA, NORTH CAROLINA, VIRGINIA, MARYLAND, DELAWARE, PENNSYLVANIA, NEW JERSEY, NEW YORK, CONNECTICUT, TENNESSEE, AND OHIO

Subject: Atlantic Coast Migratory Movement

THE SITUATION

Our records during July and August indicate that between 15,000 and 20,000 southern Negro migratory farm workers have moved up the East Coast through the Carolinas, and are now working in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland, and the two Eastern Shore Counties of Virginia. Peak harvest is now on for tomatoes, beans, peaches, and sweet corn in all of these States, except New York which will have its peak period beginning about September 15, although an immediate demand exists in central New York for about 400 bean pickers.

Beginning about September 1, New York will need to expand its farm labor force materially to meet peak requirements. Surplus migratory labor has moved out of Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware into New Jersey and counties in New York where the early demands for labor were heaviest. Tomato harvest for canneries, and the potato harvest in New Jersey overlap the beginning of the peak period in New York. This creates a situation which requires constant and careful direction of the shifting of labor crews from present work areas in other States to New York.

THE PROBLEM AND SOLUTION

On August 25, a conference was held at New Brunswick, N.J., in the office of J. C. Taylor, State Farm Labor Supervisor for New Jersey, to determine procedures which might best utilize the coordinated efforts of field personnel in balancing the supply and demand for migrant labor for this critical period. Representatives of the farm labor offices in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, and O. W. Nealy and A. D. Cobb of the Washington office participated in the discussions. It was agreed that after discounting duplicated requirements for bean pickers who could later pick potatoes and work in other crops, the combined future needs of New York and Pennsylvania could be estimated at between 800 and 1,000 workers. New Jersey farm labor assistants estimated that they should be able to route about 800 workers to New York at the end of the potato season which should be between September 10-20. A few crews may be expected to move further north out of Delaware and Maryland within the next two weeks as the tomato peak recedes. This coupled with the fact that Atkinson of Pennsylvania reported about 22,000 persons on unemployed lists in the anthracite coal counties, which might furnish some workers for New York, would seem to indicate that most of New York's requirements can be met.

A report just received from Maryland indicates that work will be slack in the Lower Shore Counties this week, and that 2 or 3 crews comprising a total of about 100 workers can be released to areas of need. Call W. L. Hillman at Pocomoke 410 for information on these crews.

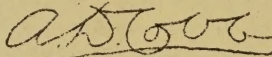
COOPERATION

Farm labor assistants in the Middle Atlantic States have been doing a fine job throughout the season by keeping in almost daily touch with each other and routing crews to points of greatest need. With a better understanding of the use which is being made of crew record slips as a result of this conference, the reports on availability of crews for replacement should get more rapid handling which will be of decided advantage to field workers in New York.

O. W. Nealy spent last week in New Jersey with Mundy and Perrine. He moves into New York this week with Vaughan and Stout; will spend a day in Potter County, Pa., and return next week to New Jersey to assist in routing crews to New York. Later he will work with Stout in New York in giving guidance to crews as they leave for Florida. Information will be furnished on bean picking jobs in several States en route, and Florida agents will be advised of the return of individual crews to that State.

Farm labor supervisors and their assistants in the Middle Atlantic region will continue to receive occasional distress calls from individual growers and, if they live up to their previous record, will find some way to fill most of them. This ability to meet situations as they develop and to foster a high degree of interstate cooperation, has marked this as the most successful season in our operational history, so far as the placement of migrant labor in this region is concerned. Knowledge gained through experience has paid dividends.

Very truly yours,



A. D. Cobb
Northeastern Area Director
Recruitment and Placement Division
Extension Farm Labor Program

